

The Microplastics Regulation & food additives – Key elements

This paper aims at providing an interpretation of the provisions of a proposed Regulation on Microplastics applicable to food additives. As such, this document is not and should not be construed as a guarantee or warrant, nor a part of any contractual or legal obligations on behalf of EU Specialty Food Ingredients and its members. This information is offered solely for the consideration, investigation and verification of interested parties.

BACKGROUND

On 26th April 2023, the REACH Committee agreed on a Commission Regulation¹ amending Annex XVII to [Regulation \(EC\) No 1907/2006](#) concerning the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) as regards synthetic polymer microparticles (the "Microplastics Regulation").

Annex XVII to REACH establishes the restrictions on the manufacture, placing on the market and use of certain dangerous substances, mixtures and articles.

The upcoming Regulation is based on the premise that "*the ubiquitous presence of tiny fragments of **synthetic or chemically-modified natural polymers, which are insoluble in water, degrade very slowly** and can easily be ingested by living organisms, raises concerns about their general impact on the environment and, potentially, on human health. Those polymers are widespread in the environment and have also been found in drinking water and food. They accumulate in the environment and contribute to microplastic pollution.*"

The upcoming Regulation includes provisions in relation to food additives, as defined in [Regulation \(EC\) 1333/2008](#) on food additives.

RELEVANT PROVISIONS IN RELATION TO FOOD ADDITIVES IN THE ANNEX TO REGULATION

"Synthetic polymer microparticles [...]:

1. Shall not be placed on the market as substances on their own or, where the synthetic polymer microparticles are present to confer a sought-after characteristic, in mixtures in a concentration equal to or greater than 0,01 % by weight.

[...]